

History

Collecting policy

User profile

This collection statement covers provision for the Department of History. The collections also serve staff and students in the Institute of Education, as well as members of Modern Languages and European Studies (French, German, Italian, and Spanish), Politics, Art, Typography and English literature. Other related areas include: the history of science (shared with various Science departments); international relations (shared with Politics); economic history; and social history.

Students from Randolph College, visiting Erasmus students, and students from local schools also use the collection, as do members of local historical societies.

Research interests

Research interests of academic staff include the political, social, economic, religious, art and cultural history of all periods of European and British history, and American history from the colonial period onwards. A more detailed list of academic staff research interests is available on the Department's website. Particular specialisms include:

- British history
- 19th and 20th century American history
- Medieval history
- Early modern history
- Modern European history
- French history
- 20th century German history
- 19th and 20th century Italian history
- Russian and Soviet history
- Local and regional history
- Rural history
- Italian Renaissance and early Baroque art and architecture
- 18th and 19th century French and Spanish art
- Modern South East Asian history
- Modern Middle Eastern history
- History and public engagement

The Department is involved in two of the University's five key research themes: "Heritage & Creativity" and "Prosperity & Resilience", along with the Arts and Humanities research themes of "Language, Text and Power" and "Modern European Histories and Cultures". It shares a Leverhulme grant with Politics to research the "Liberal way of war". The Department of History is involved with the following Research centres and groups:

- Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies (GCMS)
- Early Modern Research Centre (EMRC)
- Centre for Economic History
- Research Centre for Evacuee and War Child Studies (ResCEW)
- Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)
- Centre for Italian History

Dimensions of teaching and learning

The Department runs full and part-time degree programmes. History can also be studied as part of a joint honours undergraduate course in combination with many other subjects, including Archaeology, Ancient History, English, French, German, International Relations, Italian Philosophy, and Politics.

A full list of programmes is available at: www.reading.ac.uk/history

Current holdings

Most material is found in the classification range 900-999 (History); and some in 300 (Social Sciences), such as Women's Studies (396). Material on Church history is mostly in the 200s (Religion) and Art history in the 700s. Given the broad interdisciplinary nature of the subject, relevant materials can also be found at other classification numbers throughout the Library. For more detail, see the History *Finding Your Way* guide.

Books, e-books and multimedia

Most books relating to History are located on the 4th Floor of the Library, including sections devoted to British History (942), American History (970s), European History (940-949) and Historiography (907.2). Additional areas of interest include Politics (320s), Economic History (330.9) and Women's Studies (396).

Other areas of the Library also include relevant material, such as Religion (200s) and the History of Science (509).

The Library's Education collection contains items relating to History Teaching (907), as well as the History of Education (370.9). The Library maintains a number of History standing orders, many of which cover publications of local and record societies.

Over 3,000 e-books are available through the ACLS Humanities E-book database and there are also subscriptions to Manchester Medieval Sources Online, Cambridge Histories Online and the History collection from Oxford Handbooks Online. Single e-book titles are acquired through aggregators such as MyiLibrary, EBL and EBSCO.

Digitised primary sources include Early English Books Online (EEBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), Early European Books, Testaments to the Holocaust and various newspaper archives, several of which are contained within Gale Artemis Primary Sources.

The Library holds a small number of DVDs relating to History; there are also some microfilms of relevance, such as a collection of Race and Slavery Petitions.

The MediaHub database contains useful still and moving images, while World Newsreels Online 1929-1966 provides newsreel footage.

Periodicals

History maintains over 120 current periodical subscriptions. The cost of these is 'shared' with other Departments / Schools in the majority of cases, particularly with the Archaeology and Modern Languages and European Studies departments.

Many titles are now accessible electronically, although some titles from smaller or local publishers may only be available in hard copy. Recent acquisition of additional JSTOR packages, along with the upgrading of our subscription to Project Muse's Premium collection, has greatly increased online access to relevant History titles. Additionally, the Library now has access to all journals, including a number of History titles, published by Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Sage, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. The Department hopes to make cost savings where possible by moving to electronic-only subscriptions and looking closely at areas where research no longer takes place and so subscriptions are no longer required.

The Library has access to various online newspaper archives, such as UK Newsstand, which includes access to The Guardian, The Times and The Telegraph, and British Newspapers 1600-1950.

Reference/bibliographic

The Library holds a good collection of relevant printed reference works for History in its various reference collections.

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography is available online and in the 4th Floor Reference section. We also have online access to Who's Who and Who Was Who.

The Library subscribes to the Bibliography of British and Irish History (BBIH, the successor to the Royal Historical Society Bibliography) and the International Medieval Bibliography (IMB), each of which provides references for additional reading. We also maintain subscriptions to Credo Reference and Oxford Reference, which collectively provide access to a number of relevant reference works for History.

The Arts and Humanities Citation Index (via Web of Knowledge) indexes and abstracts a wide range of periodicals. The Library also subscribes to a number of general databases, such as WorldCat, ArticleFirst and ZETOC (a current awareness service for researchers).

Access to Parliamentary publications is available through the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers database. The Library also has access to the Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (PROME) on CD-ROM, as well as printed volumes of a number of historical government papers. The Department hopes to secure electronic access to more of these materials in future, for example by acquiring access to British History Online or State Papers Online.

Related special collections

UMASCS (University Museums and Special Collections Services) provides valuable access to primary source materials for historians at all levels. Many of the special collections are of possible relevance, but the following are especially significant.

Stenton Library

The combined academic working libraries of the historians Sir Frank Stenton and Doris, Lady Stenton. It comprises some 4,700 printed volumes, plus pamphlets and offprints, with the emphasis on medieval history.

Overstone Library

The library of John Ramsay MacCulloch (1789-1864), political economist, bought on his death and added to by the banker Samuel Jones Loyd, Baron Overstone (1796-1883). The collection comprises nearly 8,000 printed volumes, broadly humanities and social sciences in scope, and is a fine example of a nineteenth-century private library.

Cole Library

The collection, originally the private library of Professor F J Cole (1872-1959), Professor of Zoology at the University of Reading from 1907 to 1939, comprises around 8,000 volumes of printed books and scientific papers, covering the history of early medicine and zoology in general, and more particularly, comparative anatomy and reproductive physiology, from earliest times to the present day.

Turner Collection (French Revolution)

Gathered by Father John Turner (1765-1844), a member of the Community of English Benedictines in France during the Revolution. It comprises 275 volumes containing an estimated 2,500 separate pamphlets, plus newspaper cuttings, extracts, manuscript notes and transcripts, amounting to some 8,000 items in all, mainly concerning the events of 1787-1806.

Other collections

- *Great Exhibition Collection* Items relating to the 1851 Great Exhibition
- *Parish library collections* Records of the parishes of Henley, Abingdon, and others
- *Printing Collection* Includes the university's oldest book, *Ruralia commoda* by Petrus de Crescentius (1471)
- *The Museum of English Rural Life's library* Internationally important collection on agricultural history

Related archive collections

- *Astor Papers* (Papers of Waldorf and Nancy Astor)
- *Aspinall collection* (containing transcripts, microfilms and photocopies of manuscripts used for research by Arthur Aspinall, Professor of Modern History at Reading 1947-1963, and Professor of History 1963-1965)
- *Huntley and Palmers collection* Records of the local firm
- *British Publishers' archives* Records from a selection of British publishers
- *Archives of the Angevin Acta Project* (which includes high quality reproductions of Medieval manuscripts)

Strengths and exclusions

The Library collection is strong in the areas which are taught, and these largely reflect the research interests of academic staff.

The 19th and 20th century Italian history collection is of international significance. The Library's collection of Record Society publications for the British Isles is noteworthy, as is our collection of printed primary materials. British history in the early modern period is a strength. There is also a good collection of material on medieval history - especially covering the Crusades. The Library has good holdings in the field of ecclesiastical history and women's history for certain periods.

Works dealing with the history of areas outside Europe or the USA are not so numerous, but this is likely to change as new staff, with new research interests, arrive. While the collection is strong in French, German and Italian history, there is little Central or Eastern European material. Our collection of military history and imperial history is adequate.

Areas for development include Russian and Soviet history, South East Asian history, Middle Eastern history, Cold War history, the history of the USA and military history. Gaps in some areas of Women's history have also been identified.

Collecting level

Apart from the standing orders for record society publications, most purchasing is in support of the teaching requirements of the courses, with some selective purchasing supporting research, especially for the GCMS and early modern areas.

Alternative access

Inter-library loans

The department makes good use of the Inter-library loan service relative to other departments.

Other information resources in the University

The Department has a small, unstaffed Resource Centre, which contains a collection of books and material for use by members of the Department. There is some duplication of stock between the Library and Resource Centre, but these tend to be key texts which are heavily used for teaching.

Use of other libraries

Members of academic staff and research postgraduates regularly use:

- the Bodleian Library, Oxford
- the British Library
- the LSE Library
- the University of London Library
- the Institute of Historical Research, London
- Cambridge University Library

Undergraduates doing dissertations find most of the secondary material they need in the Library, but are also supported by inter-library loans when required. They are encouraged to use other local collections such as the Museum of English Rural Life Library, local studies collections and local record offices. Students are expected to locate primary source material, and more specialised reading material, for their dissertations from a variety of sources.

Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Statement for general principles.

The Department continues to address the difficult issue of balancing its need for books and periodicals across its wide range of research and teaching areas. In particular, the Department intends to re-profile its periodicals list to enable the purchase of more monographs.

Texts in English are preferred for undergraduate studies. Research level materials may be acquired in the language pertaining to their subject.

The Department generally prefers to purchase a wide range of texts on each topic for undergraduate reading rather than duplicates of textbooks. Items likely to be in high demand are made 7-day loan at the request of lecturers.

New editions will be purchased if there are significant changes in the text.

Electronic books (alongside printed copies) are the preferred format where high demand is anticipated, such as 'essential reading' for large undergraduate modules. Some instances of e-book-only purchases have been made for 'further reading' material, perhaps where only a chapter is required reading. Texts for smaller groups, or which are considered research-level material, would usually be purchased in print only.

Selection of new materials rests primarily with the Department, mainly through reading lists for taught courses and requests for individual research-level materials from lecturers. The Liaison Librarian will order extra copies for the Course Collection where there is evidence of need. Occasionally, the Department will use its own funds to purchase material for specific new courses. The Library does not normally seek to duplicate the rural history holdings of the library at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) unless there is a need to hold a copy for lending, for example if the book appears on a reading list. Research level material is, therefore, not generally collected if already held at MERL.

For the next three years, the Department has identified the following as priorities for the development of the collection:

- To maintain and enhance online resources (to cater for large numbers of undergraduates), including additional e-books
- To update the periodicals collection, thus freeing up resources for enhancement of the monograph collection
- To maintain areas of research strength

Very little historical material becomes obsolete, but there is scope for the withdrawal of some secondary material, e.g. popular biographies readily available through inter-library loans or reciprocal schemes. Other possible candidates for withdrawal are little used secondary materials in foreign languages (particularly if in a language other than French, German, Italian or Spanish), underused duplicate copies, and non-academic titles. Earlier editions of books may be withdrawn if there is limited use of the later edition and if there is nothing important which is absent from later editions. Any infrequently used items of permanent value may be relegated to closed access or remote storage after consultation with the Department.

Policy written by Charlie Carpenter, History Liaison Librarian, August 2015